

Seymour (W.P.)

The Two Ways:

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

GRADUATING CLASS

OF

CASTLETON MEDICAL COLLEGE.

DELIVERED NOVEMBER 24, 1858,

BY WILLIAM P. SEYMOUR, M. D.,

PROF. MAT. MED. AND THER., CASTLETON MEDICAL COLLEGE.

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ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN :

The period you have so long looked forward to, with mingled emotions of hope and fear, has at last arrived. You have just received the highest honors your *Alma Mater* can confer upon you, and now impatiently linger a few short minutes longer to listen to the parting words of advice or admonition which may be deemed appropriate to the hour.

Beyond the narrow limits which these walls enclose, the busy world without flows on in its accustomed channels, and the face of nature, to other eyes than yours, wears the same familiar aspect. The unconcerned spectator sees, even in this scene about you, but the evidences of a curiosity, a love of novelty, a temporary sympathy, which will die with the occasion which gives them birth. Yet the quickened play of your pulses, the heightened glow of excitement, and the unwonted depth of feeling, bear no false testimony when they impress upon your souls the conviction that this is, to you, no common morning. Whether they have come in the body or are still separated by distance, the magnetic currents which play about your hearts assure you of a spiritual communion with those who will soon clasp your hands with the pride of a father, and the generous admonition of a brother, or tremblingly press your lips with a mother's love, a sister's tenderness, and the trusting idolatry of a relationship, as yet nameless, but strangely nearer than all.

Be not ashamed, then, of the emotion which invests the present with an air of romance, and paints the future with unearthly hues ; the revelations of eternity will show your ideal world to be more real than that into which you will descend when no longer elevated by the inspirations of the hour. Listen to the "still small voice" which

tells you the ground whereon you stand is holy ; it could not be otherwise while you are the objects of so much unselfish affection, the centers around which are clustered so many high and heartfelt hopes.

To the eye of a superior intelligence you are standing upon the threshold of a life, hitherto passed in the seclusion of home, and as yet comparatively unburthened by the responsibilities of independent thought or action, while a lengthened vista of years is opening before you, full of events and issues depending to an incalculable extent upon the resolutions which may be formed under the influence of your present feelings. It is a time for self-communion, a time to carefully review the steps which have hitherto marked your progress, to conscientiously estimate your powers and capabilities for the duties before you, and definitely settle the principles which shall control your future course.

It becomes not me to dwell upon those higher interests which concern you as immortal beings, and which are involved in the decisions you may form. Such thoughts are left to the promptings of conscience, the associations which are suggested by this consecrated place, and the awakened sense of accountability which is ever present at each important era of our lives.

As the representative of those who have hitherto directed your studies, and as a member of the profession you are this day authorized to practice, I stand here to point out two diverging ways before you, and present, with what judgment I may, a few considerations which may determine your choice.

The degree of Doctor of Medicine with which you have just been invested has long ceased to have a definite value. It is traditional that it once stamped its recipient as the possessor of a notable amount of knowledge concerning the ordinary operations of nature — as learned in the sciences on which the practice of medicine is based, and as well skilled in the treatment of all the forms of disease to which the human body is liable. It argued the existence of thorough culture, scholarly tastes, a high sense of honor, a love of the profession, a courteous regard for the rights and interests of others, and that generous elevation of sentiment which characterizes the gentleman. In that day the title *Medicinae Doctor* was popularly interpreted by the terms “doctor” and

“physician,” and these words were held as virtually synonymous. It is still the fashion, especially on occasions like this, to speak of the profession as composed mainly of such elements, and to please the ear with glowing descriptions of the dignified position and honorable labors which inevitably await the young graduate. It has ever been my aim to consult your true advancement rather than pleasure, and it will excite no emotions of surprise if even the parting cup I present you is an infusion of pure bitters. Be assured, then, that *all such ideas are simply the illusions of fancy.*

The title of “Doctor” has been so largely appropriated by itinerant lecturers, veterinary surgeons, quack-medicine venders, and the whole army of irregular quacks, that you will do well to drop it when traveling, lest, among strangers, your respectability should be called in question. As applied to the regularly licensed members of the profession, it signifies that the bearer has been a “medical student,” and has, in due course of time, received his diploma, opened an office and commenced practice. To the minds of the initiated and the better informed classes of the public, this is the full extent of its present meaning. It would be an interesting and not uninteresting exercise to trace out the various causes which have, each in their peculiar way, led to the great change which has taken place in the signification of this distinctive title. The low standard of preliminary education, the multiplicity of medical colleges and their consequent rivalry, the immigration of apothecary-doctors and mere surgeons, the small distinction which the public make between the learned and unlearned, the regular and the quack in the choice of a physician, (perhaps the frightful increase in the number of those in a sister profession who receive a corresponding title,) these and many other causes might be mentioned as having contributed to bring about the result. But a more important cause than either or all of these named may be found in the fact that so many graduates cease to be students, if they ever were such, when they attain the doctorate and turn their whole attention to their mere pecuniary advancement. Science is neglected for the practice of petty arts, and losing all aspirations for anything higher than a popular reputation, they soon fall to the dead level of the mere “doctor,” and deserve no higher consideration than is accorded to that equivocal title.

The term "Physician" has, for manifest reasons, escaped, to a great extent, the unfortunate fate of its fellow ; and having a more exclusive application and fewer vulgar associations, still preserves an odor of scholarship.

You have this day, then, to decide whether you will join the army of the "doctors," or whether, carrying with you into after life the better feelings of the hour, you will strive to attain to the standing of the true physician ; the way of the one is broad and easy, the way of the other is "no royal road."

That you should ever be inclined to cast your lot with the "doctors," you now regard as an impossibility, and hold the bare suggestion of the idea as insulting to your understanding and strangely regardless of the proprieties of the occasion. I must do you and my colleagues the justice to say, that the opinion that some of your number will eventually be found in this respectable fraternity, is derived from observation of the relative proportion of these inharmonious elements in the profession and the simple calculation of the possible chances, and not from any unfavorable opinion formed of your characters.

I assume, then, that some one or more of you will become "doctors." Making no claim to the spirit of prophecy, I disclaim all knowledge or suspicion as to whom it will be. The brand is not yet on the forehead of any, and whether it ever will be, or if so upon whom, depends upon yourselves to determine. The omniscient eye alone is able to foresee the mark, invisible to all else before the day of the murder, which will proclaim you as one actuated by that first expressed of evil sentiments, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Whichever way you choose it will become you to be diligent ; ours is a profession in which indolence may maintain a precarious existence, but it never secures a prize. The diligence which is required for a rapid advancement in these diverging courses of action is, however, very different in kind, in aim and in ultimate results.

The diligence of the "doctor" is emphatically a "diligence in business," and to this kind of diligence you know we are enjoined by very high authority. As a "doctor," the only aim of your life will be to get practice for your own personal and pecuniary

advancement, and to succeed in this laudable purpose, two things are essential: first, *to become known*; second, *to obtain the confidence of the community*. A few hints as to some of the most efficient modes of accomplishing these important ends, I propose to give you:

In the first place I remark, that little things are of vital importance; recollect that your aim is little, and must necessarily determine the character of the efforts put forth to attain it; you will, therefore “despise not the day of small things,” or you will inevitably end by despising yourself, and thus losing half the enjoyment you anticipate from success. You will not even neglect such small matters as the proper location, the internal arrangement and the external appearance of an office, or even the humble sign. Such important preliminaries settled, you will study well the habits of the community in which you locate, and take your measures accordingly. Man is a gregarious animal, and when released from the pressure of his daily cares, seeks relaxation in the companionship of his fellows; you will seek him, then, in his accustomed haunts, and affect, though you should not feel, an interest in everything that interests influential classes.

Politics, in the present unsettled state of the public mind, is so fickle a sea that I would caution you against embarking your fortunes upon it, unless you are possessed of the happy faculty of detecting the first indications of its tidal changes, and the less rare facility of altering your course to suit the necessities of wind and current. In such case you may venture, with a reasonable hope that some fat office will eventually reward your patriotic endeavors. But to the majority of aspirants for the “doctor’s” honors there are other fields of action which, when well cultivated, afford a more certain prospect of remunerating the labor bestowed, and are, at the same time, free from many objections which are incident to politics, not the least of which is the incurring, almost certainly, the enmity of the warmer partisans on the “other side.”

Temperance, Free Masonry, Odd Fellowship and the uniformed Militia have each their peculiar advantages, and present ample opportunities for the exhibition of the most varied talents. Circumstances will determine whether it is most politic to confine your attention to one or more of these; the most rare aptitude for

legitimate quackery being required for a successful cultivation of all. Temperance has the drawback of demanding on the part of its advocate a certain conformity, in practice, to the requirements of the precepts enforced, and as the fashionable motto of the day is "touch not, taste not," your self-denial may be subjected to draughts which it will seriously inconvenience the flesh to honor. You may obviate this difficulty in a measure by bearing in mind the fact that reputation is the object of your aim and not character; append then, to the motto the word "publicly," and the difficulty will be mainly overcome. Should you be detected in private indulgence, you can safely appeal to the morbid sentimentalism of the day which adopts the maxim "to err is human, to forgive divine," and ignores all the other attributes *except mercy*. You will find this an ample protection against the charge of hypocrisy, and will still be credited with the love for your race which prompted, and the zeal which characterized your teachings. Or it will be understood that your precepts are but the expression of your professional opinions, and you will obtain credit for your attainments as a "doctor," though your imperfections as a man be admitted; just as lawyers, by an indulgent community, are never charged with inconsistency, but are applauded for the skill displayed in collecting the debts of others though they should never pay their own.

There is, however, the same objection, in kind, to temperance as a hobby on which to ride into practice, which was before mentioned as pertaining to politics, though it does not exist in the same degree. There are those who feel that every public advocate of temperance is warring upon their private interests, and these will regard you as a personal enemy. You will examine, therefore, carefully your ground, and make a just estimate of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of committing yourself upon this topic before taking the field. Perhaps you will find it most politic to take no decided position, but to act upon the golden rule, and "Be all things to all men, hoping that some of them may do you some good; always recollecting that it is as great a sin to cheat yourself as it is to cheat your neighbor."

The cultivation of Free Masonry is open to no objection. It is professed by a large and influential body of men, theoretically actuated by the highest motives, and practically affecting a great

amount of good, which without its organizations would be left undone; there is nothing unseemly, then, in your affecting the "lamb-skin apron."

The "square" and the "compass," the "plumb" and the "level" are very pretty and proper emblems by which to impress a moral lesson, and, if you escape a mental application of these symbols to the devious ways you tread, it will not predjudice you in the estimation of any but the most bitter "Morgan" that you are supposed to make them the guides of your professional conduct. On the other hand you will command the confidence of the "brethren," who will rely upon your discretion in preserving a "silent tongue" concerning the communications imparted on the "mystic square," though they might scorn the Hippocratic oath; just as the Chinaman regards the bargain, solemnized by the decapitation of the cock, as more sacred than if secured by the sealed document; or as the pious Hindoo yields his belief to the testimony given on the tail of the sacred cow, though he doubts the witness who asserts his veracity on the inspired volume.

The same general remarks may, with equal justice, be applied to Odd Fellowship, and various other of the philanthropic and charitable organizations of the day. By entering into these, and taking an active part in their operations, you secure not only the acquaintance, but the sympathy and active support of many worthy and respectable men. Actuated themselves by creditable motives, they are slow to suspect the influences which have brought you into their companionship, and their good will flows out towards you, in accordance with the simple law—

"A fellow feeling makes one wondrous kind."

But it is as a surgeon to the uniformed militia—those brave defenders of our common country—that you will become most widely known, and win your most brilliant honors. Who among us fails to recollect the boyish admiration with which we gathered around the mounted staff on the day of the general muster? or the eagerness with which we listened for every word which fell from the lips of those doughty soldiers? or the overpowering sentiments of respect we felt for all their belongings?—a respect even transferred to the ragged boy, who bestrode the fiery steed, resigned to his temporary keeping when the aforesaid lips were dry? 'Tis

true age has somewhat tempered our boyish admiration. Our hair has been so often cut and brushed, and our measures so often taken by the same hands which grasped the glittering weapons once so dazzling to our eyes, that we have grown familiar, and thoughts of the friendly shears and warm-breasted goose drive out the visions of the tented field which rose on our younger days ; but the most careless observation assures us that very many, if they have grown older, are at least no wiser than when blessed with fewer years. Aspire, then, to the post of regimental surgeon. Here and there a quiet spectator may compare you to the thronging columns of empty muskets behind you, and recognize the fact that analagous conditions render you the only really dangerous element in the imposing spectacle ; but content yourself with the conviction that those eyes, at least, which are bent upon you from the areas and over-hanging attics, while they invest your plumed companions with the heroism of Ney, the dashing gallantry of Murat, and the terrible energy of the great Napoleon, will, by a parity of reasoning, regard you somewhat in the light of a Hennan, a Guthrie and a Baron Larrey.

The mention of the military surgeon naturally suggests another important recommendation of a course which is equally efficient in answering either the indication to make yourself known, or to secure the confidence of the public ; it is this, *by all means practice surgery*,—the “physician” may succeed without it, the “doctor” rarely can. You may feel surprise that I should advise a sciolist to practice surgery. Having, during your attendance on lectures, always observed the practice of this noble art, associated with the most accurate anatomical knowledge and rare manual dexterity ; and having your attention so often directed to the various operative procedures recommended by the different masters of the art, both ancient and modern, you have, naturally, retained the vulgar error of supposing that anatomical knowledge, manual dexterity, and familiarity with the literature of the profession, are absolutely essential to its practice. A more extended acquaintance with the profession will effectually disabuse you of this popular prejudice. Surgery has, even more than medicine, its “doctors,” as well as its “physicians.”

It is among the ranks of the “doctor surgeons” you will find

the majority of those who affect to despise the science and art of obstetrics, and who are most earnest in urging the necessity of turning its cultivation, and the treatment of all the diseases of women over to the fostering care of "female doctors." Trusting, as the majority of this class of wise-sayers do, to the *eclat* and popular reputation, so cheaply earned by even bad surgery, they soon become profoundly ignorant of every department of medical science, except the art of operative surgery; and of this, even, their knowledge extends only to a smattering acquaintance with one or two of the leading text-books of the day. Having lost all scholarly tastes and attainments, if such were ever possessed, and priding themselves only on their skill, with less reason than a wood-carver or glass-blower might do, it is not to be expected that they would have any confidence in those departments of our science requiring scholarly attainments to appreciate. We are not therefore surprised to find that the larger proportion of these brilliant geniuses have no confidence in the theories of medicine or the doctrines of Therapeutics, but profess themselves eminently "practical," and limit themselves in their medical practice, like their compeers of the other sex, to the use of approved recipes, which "experience" has found efficient in the management of particular diseases. Be then a "doctor surgeon;" allow no modesty to stand in your way; you must be, indeed, lamentably deficient in knowledge and skill, and surprisingly weak in the power of affecting both, if you cannot approve yourself the equal of the majority of this large and most successful class of the regular quacks.

Surgery, good or bad, and whether good or bad the community are not capable of judging, appeals directly to the strongest fallacies of the day. Insensibility to the sufferings of others, and the power of witnessing or inflicting pain unmoved, is a mental trait acquired more easily than mankind are generally aware. Courage is no necessary element in its possession; if it were the knife-executioners of China, and the Thugs of India, to say nothing of those gentle ~~muses~~ *musicians* of a forgotten age, whose duty it was to smother the dying and shorten their pangs, might successfully lay claim to the palm. Yet there is no prejudice more deeply rooted, than that which considers courage as the most striking characteris-

tic of every dabbler in surgery. To this fact, and the lack of moral courage to acknowledge their pusillanimity, we are indebted for that large class of vaporing surgeons, "who just as lief cut a man's throat as not." None knows better than the really able surgeon *how certain they are to do it*, in every case requiring skill and the coolness attendant in all cases on correct knowledge alone. The idea that the practitioner of surgery is necessarily an accomplished physician, and even the superior of those who make the practice of medicine their exclusive study, is, among the lower classes, not less common. Our own countrymen are even more ignorant in this respect than the immigrants from abroad; many of the latter are aware that in Great Britain, at least, surgery is often made a distinct profession, and that the standard of requirement is far lower than that of the doctor of medicine.

With us the rabble are ready to give in their adhesion to the importance and certainty of surgery, and are loud in their praises, and open-eyed in their admiration of the operative surgeon, whilst they have no faith in medicine as a science or in its practitioners except as a matter of personal prejudice. They do not believe in the art as founded upon knowledge obtained only by the thorough prosecution of the natural and medical sciences; though they do confide in certain physicians, as possessing that mysterious tact,—those incommunicable powers,—which are in some way, they know not how, possessed by some and denied to others, without any reference to their knowledge or abilities. However much we may deplore this state of affairs when we witness its effect upon the profession, in keeping from its ranks the well-educated and talented, who are unwilling to enter a field where impudence and physical energy are frequently more successful than knowledge and talent; we are obliged to admit that, under the circumstances, it is perfectly natural. People are not capable of judging any other branch of our profession than operative surgery, and, even in this department they cannot judge between the real surgeon and the merest trickster with the knife, whose highest feats are as intellectual as the performances of the Chinese jugglers, and not a hundredth part so dextrous. *Practice surgery* then; there is no quicker way to acquire the confidence of community; no manner in which you can invest a limited amount of intellectual capital to

greater and more speedy profit. In all doubtful or intractable cases of disease you will be called to advise your brother practitioners, the physician as well as the doctor, though even the latter may despise your pretensions to enlighten him, and the former be hardly restrained by the etiquette of the profession from refusing to meet you at the bed-side. You will be called by coroners' inquests and courts to settle all medical questions, though the understanding of them should involve a knowledge of Physiology or Pathology, Chemistry or Toxicology, or any other science of which you know nothing.

And *you will settle them* to the satisfaction of crude coroners and their juries at least, if not to that of courts and judges. You will determine positively the non-existence of strychnia in a human stomach between daylight and dark, though mere chemists would require a week to arrive at a satisfactory solution of so important a question. You will be called to the assistance of the *accoucheur* though the "curve of Carus" should suggest to your benighted mind vague ideas of the conic sections, and you should be as ignorant of the pelvic straits as you doubtless are of the soundings of Magellan or Gibraltar. And *you will come out of all such trials with honor*. If the case is unfortunate in its result, however much you may be responsible for it, the very result itself will exhonorate you, for what better evidence could there be of its desperate character, than its fatal termination? If the patient survives you will be duly applauded, though the greatest risk incurred may have been in not trusting to the chances of wind and tide, rather than your unscientific piloting.

But the greatest value of surgery to the "doctor" is the multiplicity of opportunities it affords for the exercise of his most brilliant talent — "*blowing*." "In Chili," says Zimmerman, "the physicians blow around the beds of their patients to drive away diseases; and as the people in that country believe that the physis consists wholly in the wind, their doctors would take it very ill of any person who should attempt to make the method of cure more difficult; *they think they know enough when they know how to blow*." Our doctors, compared with those of Chili, are greater knaves and less fools; they do not believe in *curing* patients by "*blowing*,"

although they may be possessed of no other mode, but they are well aware of the value of this intellectual exercise in *getting them*. There are many ways of "blowing" which time will not permit to enumerate, but which will be easily learned by him who relies upon the arts of the "doctor" instead of the science of the "physician" for professional success. Many are so stale that none but the most impudent have the face to practice them. All the little tricks which are designed to convey the idea of having an extensive practice are of this character; such as writing a number of messages on one's own office slate; being regularly called out of public assemblages by appointment; and driving furiously past houses of public worship, just as the congregations are going to or from service. But it is in the line of Falstaff that true genius is manifested in this indispensable accomplishment. The number of cases of any prevailing disease which a "blowing doctor" has under treatment, or has treated, is truly wonderful, and if you doubt the existence of these "men in buckram," he is ever ready to furnish some positive evidence of the veracity of the narrative. The character of his surgical adventures is particularly marvellous, and though their falschood is "open, palpable," and the occasion of secret mirth to the "Bardolphs" in his confidence, they are readily accepted as true by those not yet advised of the imaginative powers of the swaggering hero. Surgery has the great advantage, moreover, of bringing the aid of the daily press to the blowing powers of the doctor. Men will sicken and die, while no notice is taken of the fact beyond the announcement of the funeral; but every little accident is greedily caught up and made the basis of a sensation article, with which to stimulate the vulgar taste which loves to "sup on horrors." Friendly relations with the item-gatherer will secure the insertion with every spicy paragraph of this character of the advertisement that "Dr. Blower was called;" the printer's devil may laugh, as he is generally sensible enough to do, over the daily repetition of the familiar phrase, for he understands the full value of the announcement; but the derisive sounds will be lost in the heavy clang of the power-press, which thunders it in the ears of thousands whose highest standard of authority is, "the papers said so." Cultivate, then, the friendship of the item-

gatherer; the labors of this literary scavenger will render fruitful a soil too thin and poor to pay the expense of cultivation when not enriched by his contributions.

There is yet another mode of commanding confidence which you may not have an opportunity of putting in practice, though it is so efficient, when practicable, that I cannot neglect its mention without doing the subject injustice.

Impress upon the public mind the conviction that *you are possessed of some valuable knowledge not equally enjoyed by others.*

The most respectable example of this species of quackery is afforded by our homœopathic friends when they claim to be guided by certain infallible laws, the enunciation of which they dignify as a scientific system. The least respectable examples are furnished by that class which is so pathetically represented by the "retired physician whose sands have nearly run out."

I say the homœopathic is the most respectable type of this form of quackery; and it is so because it is an open, bold, unscrupulous violation of all common laws, both of sense and honesty, and we respect it as we do the pirate or the highwayman, compared with the petty thief, though even handed justice consigns them to the same dock.

We have another reason, and that is the obligation we are under to them for the opportunity afforded of studying the natural history of disease; an opportunity, except in the days of Stahl, not enjoyed since the time of Hippocrates; and an opportunity, I may add, which would be far more valuable *now* if they would *wholly* refrain from allopathic doses of medicines. We have another reason for respecting homœopathy, which weighs with the power of gratitude on the hearts of all medical teachers. It is a safe asylum, conducted on the voluntary system, and well supported by a charitable public, to which all those imbeciles too weak in intellect or honesty to be trusted with the edged tools of the *materia medica*, repair, when they find their advancement in the profession fails to keep pace with that of their stronger or more fortunate competitors.

I do not suppose you will ever join the homœopathists or become so indifferent to your continuance in the pale of your profession as to advertise yourself as the possessor of any secret remedy; but there is a way of accomplishing the object recommended,

which experience shows to be perfectly successful, while you escape being placed in the pillory. Possess yourself of the *prescriptions* of some departed Nestor of the profession long honored in the neighborhood where you design to locate; this you can easily do through the good nature of the pharmacist who was accustomed to compound them.

Armed with these, you can attack the credulity of the public with little fear of failing to secure its confidence. You can accomplish this result gradually by a verbal communication here and there to an admiring listener, trusting to its gradual dissemination, or you may boldly address a circular to the former friends of the physician, whose patients you covet, and thus carry their confidence by storm. The only difficulty lies in graduating the strength of your self-laudatory notes, so that they may not come back to you from the resisting ranks of professional auditors in tones too much like thunder to prove agreeable. You can obviate this difficulty, in a measure, by expending your epithets of praise on the formulæ whose wonderful composition and miraculous powers attest the wisdom and skill of the original constructor, claiming only the humble merit of being the fortunate possessor, actuated by the laudable desire to alleviate the sorrows of a community, audibly grieving over the loss of the long sought elixirs of life.

The fulfillment of the indication is so difficult without risking your professional standing; and, although possessed of the proper means and satisfied of their efficacy, so much depends on their proper dose and mode of administration, that I am compelled to depart from my usual custom, and give you a prescription suited to the particular condition of the public, on the one hand, and of the profession on the other.

DEAR SIR:—As the question has been frequently asked me, whether I could prepare “Dr. DEPARTED’s Cough Drops,” I take this method of informing those who were formerly patrons of Dr. D., and others, that I have in my possession his original book of Recipes, for all the different Cough Mixtures, so justly celebrated in diseases of the lungs and throat.

This book also contains the formulæ for preparations used by Dr. D., with marked efficacy, in the cure of Catarrh, Whooping Cough, Dyspepsia, Dysentery, Cholera, and various chronic diseases. The Cough Mixtures, it must not be supposed, were always the same. They are to be varied according to the symptoms of the case on hand. Hence the impossibility of any one preparation being adapted to all cases. Yours respectfully.

You may sign this with your proper signature, and address it to all the former patients of the honored physician, whose grave you thus rudely violate. Be not afraid, the day of ghosts has passed, spiritualism to the contrary, notwithstanding, and this is a kind of body-snatching which community is not disgusted at, though the profession may experience qualms which will threaten your forcible ejection.

I see you are disgusted at the bare suggestion of so apparently bald an expedient, an expedient which you consider so grossly quackish, so nearly allied to the standing advertisement of the "retired physician," as to stultify the one who proposes it, as calculated to either answer the end desired, or to escape the righteous vengeance of the profession.

Gentlemen, I sympathise with your disgust, and I regret, too late, the unfortunate adoption of a plan which requires that I should point out the "way of the doctor," and paint with what poor skill I possess, the lineaments which distinguish him. But I must peremptorily deny the implied charge of slander, either the public or the profession, when I advise you that these arts you may everywhere successfully practice and still be acknowledged, in many communities, as a respectable member of an honorable profession.

None expect, for a moment, that the mechanic, who possesses himself of the tools of some skillful brother, will do the work which won for their former owner the reputation of a master among his fellows.

The common painter might abandon the field of his former labors and come out into this beautiful valley. He might purchase the pleasant cottage, so long the abode of taste, and genius, and practiced skill, and with it the easel, the pallet, the well assorted colors, and the magic brushes which, in the hands of the accomplished artist, had evoked from the spotless canvas so many forms of beauty, so perfect portraits of the face of nature, that the quiet studio had become the resort of wealth, and taste and humble worshipers at the shrine of art. His eye would rest upon the same magnificent prospect. The quiet village, with its shady streets — the winding river — the broad bosom of the silver lake — meadow upland, interval, and around all the cloud-capped mountains —

nature is still the same. Has she the same appreciative observer? Will the varying expressions which successive seasons impart to her changing features, now find a fit interpreter?

No! There is no magic in the brush—the mental eye is wanting and the painter's hand is powerless. None are disappointed, as none were absurd enough to anticipate any different result.

You ask, “does the knowledge of our science demand less mental effort? Is the practice of our art less difficult?” I answer, far otherwise; but the community seems to reason differently. The public has no confidence in medicine as a science; no idea of practical skill, as based on a knowledge of the pathological changes taking place in disease on the one hand, and the physiological effects of remedial agents and their consequent applicability to the correction of the pathological conditions, on the other.

It considers the knowledge of the physician to be simply a knowledge of the effects of particular medicines on certain diseases, so called; in common language, he “knows what is good” for a disease named.

This is exactly the kind of knowledge possessed by the “experienced nurse,” who “knows what is good for fits,” though she has not the faintest knowledge of the condition of the different organs of the body during the “fits,” and could not comprehend if she were told the action on the different functions of the body of the medicine which she so confidently prescribes for them. It is fair to assume then that those who so often express their readiness to trust themselves to the care of the nurse, as cheerfully as they would to that of the members of the profession, recognise no difference in *kind*, even if they do in *degree*, between her knowledge and that of the educated physician. In announcing your possession, then, of the *recipes* of a physician, who, during a long life had acquired a reputation for skill, you make an appeal to one of the most wide-spread and deeply rooted prejudices of every community. Possessed of these, they will suppose you possessed of all the resources your predecessor had at command, and will have more confidence in your ability to heal the sick than they would if they knew you were profoundly versed in all the science of the schools.

In making such an appeal, it is true, you deliberately act out a

lie, for you know that prescriptions, like the painter's brushes, are valuable only to the real artist, and you can buy in any of the prescription books of the day a better assortment than any physician possesses. You endorse, also, an erroneous opinion, the existing of which tends to place the profession, in the estimation of community, on the same general level with patent-medicine venders and the other reptiles which swarm in the great pool of quackery, and you thus retard to the full extent of your influence the approach of that day when learning and science shall be regarded as the only true measure of capacity for the performance of the physician's duties.

"And yet," I think I hear you say, "you assert that I may do this, and still be acknowledged as a respectable member of an honorable profession."

Perhaps I stated it too strongly, you *will not* be considered a respectable member *by physicians anywhere*; for there *are* acts which a doctor may commit, which even the ordinary tricks of his species do not furnish an extenuating example for; but you will be still recognized *even by physicians*. What more do you desire? You will have secured the confidence of an enlightened public and all the "more valuable considerations" which result therefrom, and you are still allowed to call yourself an acknowledged member of a profession which calls itself honorable. Some will continue to consult with you for the sake of the fee; others because they think of the adage about glass houses, and, fearing the *tu quoque*, are silent. Physicians will consult with, though they despise you; some because they lack the moral courage to face the abuse of your friends, which the refusal to do so would excite; others because they fear that the refusal to do so may be ascribed to interested motives.

If any should refuse, plead ignorance, make a private confession of penitence, and if they are christians they will argue that "we could not withhold our forgiveness of the repentant wanderer consistent with our reverence for the higher law." They will do that as christians which, as physicians they had no right to do; they will arrogate to themselves the power of pronouncing absolution for an offense committed, not against them, but against the whole profession, of which they are, however honored, but individual members.

If these and kindred arts which their mention will naturally suggest, are not sufficient to ensure your success in practice, I know of no other course than to *join a church*.

There is no form of corporation-spirit so powerful as that which the devil, for it can have no purer source, puts into a christian congregation. The existence of this spirit is so palpable, and the manifestations of its strength in different individuals has so little relation to their apparent piety that wicked men are sometimes led to think it has some possible connection with worldly policy.

This is certainly an uncharitable judgment, and we are inclined to think an unphilosophical one. We are disposed to believe the arch-enemy brings about this result, to limit the otherwise perilous diffusion of christian sympathies, by acting on a well-known law of our mental constitution—the sympathy arising from the possession of common objects of thought and interest. Whatever the cause is, it exists, and, as far as the interests of the doctor is concerned, is most powerfully manifested by three classes. The first is of that class of ladies who have long passed the age when “puss” would have seemed an appropriate term of endearment even from the fondest lips. They hardly recollect the pranks of other days but have become quite old tabbys, grateful for small attentions, having a weakness for the easy chairs of sick rooms. Their affections are easily gained, and although they cannot strengthen much the hands of the doctor, they may warm them somewhat, and their gentle purring will attest his goodness.

The second is that other class of ladies of a doubtful age, generally single, sometimes married, who are usually designated by the term “strong minded.” They sympathise with all the emancipation movements of the day, particularly with that for the emancipation of women. They are great managers, strong at sewing parties, indefatigable among the sick, and invaluable to undertakers. They believe in “female doctors,” but, in lack of these, choose one who conforms most nearly to their directions, of which peculiarity the church doctor is aware, and is generally the one selected. Whatever feline traits this class possesses are of the tiger quality, and are manifested alike in the defense of their own minister or doctor and in the attack on those of others. They are the most frequent occasion of consultations, and to their gentle ministrations

may be traced much of the kind feeling which admittedly characterizes the intercourse of the profession.

The third class is of the sterner sex, and is composed of that small but active body of business men who give the church doctor all the currency they can, just as they do the bills of their favorite bank, to increase the strength of the institution.

If the galvanizing power of this spiritual trio fails to restore suspended animation to your professional prospects, you may well despair; for it has given life and strength to many a doctor, of whom, as far at least as his reputation among his professional brethren was concerned, it might truly be said, "he stinketh."

My task is well nigh done. I have pointed out the "way of the doctor," and have only to say, if either of you like it, "walk ye in it." You will find it a dusty way, for it runs *parallel to another of which we read*, and there are *many who walk therein*.

In the name of an honorable profession I am tempted to pronounce upon the one, if any, who shall select this way, the benediction given to the Prince of Hoheneck:

Maledictione perpetua,
Maledicat us
Pater eternus!

But I forbear, contented with the admonition that—

"No action, foul or fair,
Is ever done, but it leaves somewhere
A record, written by fingers ghostly,
As a blessing or a curse, and *mostly*
In the greater weakness or greater strength
Of the acts which follow it, till at length
The wrongs of ages are redressed,
And the justice of God made manifest."

But, gentlemen, the opportunity afforded by intimate acquaintance assures me that some of you at least will choose the other way, and will, by all the abilities you are masters of, endeavor to attain to the elevation of the true physician. Time will not permit, if ability were not wanting, that I should paint the character or point the way of the antipode of the doctor, yet a few words of advice may be not unexpected before bidding such of you a final adieu. I remark, then, that as physicians you will make it the first object of your life; and an object which you will keep in view THROUGH life, *to understand your profession as a SCIENCE*, and *keep up with*

its advancement. There is no other way in which you can honestly fulfill the duties devolving on you in the practice of the *art*; for it is an *art*, which cannot be practiced except *very, very poorly*, without a thorough knowledge of the sciences on which it is based.

Indolence, bad preliminary education, pecuniary cares, the engrossing practice of the art, the small encouragement afforded by the appreciation of the public, all may conspire to make you a "doctor," but, if properly impressed with the necessity of the effort, you can overcome them all. In no other way can you practice with dignity to yourself or honor to the profession. Whatever may be said to the contrary, there is nothing dignified in mere labor, as such, of whatever kind or character, any more than there is in mere strength. It must depend for its dignity upon the intelligence which directs it, the motives which prompt it, and *is not* dependent on the nature of its results.

The ass is never dignified, whether he labors in the mill — crosses the Alps, or enters in triumph the gates of Jerusalem.

The laborious duties of the physician are least of all dignified, unless performed by the hand of mercy, "which droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven," or of science, "to which all things are clean."

In the practice of medicine, guard against that most dangerous tendency, to become a mere prescription-monger. Never cease studying the physiological actions of medicines and the pathological changes of disease, in the new light which the advancement of medical science is ever throwing upon these important departments of medical knowledge, and you will always be able to make your own prescriptions and adapt them to the requirements of each particular case. Without such knowledge of medicines and diseases, you may become an empirical practitioner, but will never be able to use, with judgment, even the prescriptions recommended by authorities.

In the practice of surgery always bear in mind the fact, most readily admitted by all good surgeons, that the *mere operator* is the smallest kind of professional man. Study the *principles* of surgery, and aspire to that *higher skill which saves*; and recollect that in surgery, as in obstetrics, the best practitioner is the one who, in the same cases, makes the fewest appeals to instruments.

There is another topic which I touch upon with diffidence. The medical profession has been often accused of a tendency to atheism. This accusation has long ceased to have the slightest foundation in truth. No man who attains to the standing of the true physician, ever doubts the existence of a God, though he may doubt many theological doctrines.

The microscope of the physiologist makes manifest the Almighty power, the inscrutable wisdom, the omnipresence, and the unfailing goodness of the great Creator, even more than the telescope of the astronomer.

Who can study anatomy and chemistry and physiology in their broader relations to the animal and vegetable kingdoms, the organic and inorganic world, and fail to see God everywhere? He may not be the God of *sects*, but he is the greater and the better God of nature.

The accusation is more confidently made, that its tendencies are irreligious. This accusation we also emphatically deny.

The thorough student of nature, whether his studies are confined to some of the narrower fields of natural science, or relate to the illimitable region of medical philosophy, *requiring the use of all science as an instrument for its investigation*, is met at last in every direction by ultimate facts beyond which the human mind cannot go; but which point to one all-powerful, all-wise, all-merciful Creator — here he humbly erects his altar and reverently worships.

But it is said he worships not in the humble spirit of the Christian; but in the pride of philosophy. This also we deny.

True philosophy is ever humble, and the sciolist alone attaches a self-complacent value to his offering. Humility is not the spiritual element then which distinguishes the Christian from the medical philosopher. The truth is, the philosopher is in each instance the same humble being — the difference is in the man — and human nature finds its fullest development, its loftiest manifestations of spiritual character when it is represented in the same individual, both as philosopher and Christian, by the *christian physician*.

Be then, if you will, a *christian physician*, the profession welcomes such and has need of them; but it needs no "*christian doctors*," or "*doctor christians*;" it has already an ample supply.

Carry with you, if you will, the cross ; but use it that you may crucify upon it :

“The low desire, the base design,
That makes another’s virtue less ;
The revel of the ruddy wine,
And all occasions of excess.

“The longing for ignoble things ;
The strife for triumph more than truth ;
The hardening of the heart, that brings
Irreverence for the dreams of youth.

“All thoughts of ill, all evil deeds
That have their root in thoughts of ill ;
Whatever hinders or impedes
The action of the nobler will.”

Don’t crucify upon it every professional brother, because he has the misfortune to be irreligious. We have enough already, who make long prayers and thank God they are not like other men ; who judiciously drop a whining regret concerning the irreligion of some professional brother, which spreads like a spark through the sulphureous elements, existing in every orthodox community, and blows up a reputation too strong to be overthrown by less cowardly means.

If your christianity so impairs your self-respect that you are overcome by the mildest attack of insolence ; if it so bends your back as to fit it, like that of the patient ass, to every burden which a brutal and selfish world chosens to impose on it ; if it so fills you with the milk of human kindness that you become unctuous to the feel, and soft to every impression which designing men may choose to make on you, I would respectfully submit a doubt of its genuineness.

The profession, at least, has plenty of it, and needs most, a christianity which shall carry the spear of Ithuriel and the sword of Peter. The spear to compel every form of quackery, within or without its bounds, to assume its proper shape. The sword to lessen the ears of all who ignorantly and with insolence would dishonor it.

We have enough already who would throw the mantle of a false charity over every form of imposture, and submit quietly to the attacks of the servants of every opposing system.

The importance and almost necessity of a *physician being also a christian*, is sometimes urged for various reasons, such as, that he may invoke a blessing upon the result of his labors — that occupying, as he often does, an influential position in a community, his example may be such as will advance the *moral* as well as physical interests of his patients — and that he may afford consolation to the dying.

There is much to be said in support of this position, and great force in the reasons urged. Those whom exalted wisdom and acknowledged piety have rendered proper persons to enlarge upon this view of a physician's qualifications, *have* said much of this nature, of which I would not diminish, by the weight of a grain, the legitimate force. I think it not improper, however, to throw out a few hints, concerning these important suggestions, in a spirit which I trust will neither be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

First, then, I would remark that though Therapeutics recognises the important influence of faith, *when existing in the mind of the patient*, over the effect of medicines; and, though we can, philosophically, account in this way for the result of some cases, said to have been "made whole" by the administration of very small doses of sugar; I would advise you to trust more to a *proper dose*, and *mode of administration*, than to the influence of this principle, when dealing with *powerful remedies*. I have heard of some very worthy old women, who were unwilling to trust their cases to physicians, accused of impiety, lest their efforts should not be blessed; yet, although I recognize their wisdom, as long as such were their feelings, in appealing to members of the profession undoubtedly orthodox, I have searched Pharmacology in vain for reasons to shake the belief that the ultimate result of their cases would be determined, principally, by the question whether their medical attendant was, or was not a *skillful physician*.

Faith, *in the mind of the patient*, is an element of great power, and, so far from saying or doing anything to discourage it, unless it assumes the form of presentiments of evil, you will strengthen it by all legitimate means. You will be careful, however, how you trust to that existing *in your own mind*. Experience will teach you that it is little worth, unless as it is based on a clear conception of the necessities of the case, and a consciousness that

you have prescribed medicines of sufficient power and with enlightened judgment to meet them.

Above all, if you ever make a mistake, and administer an over dose of any poisonous agent, trust to nothing less tangible than the instant administration of the proper antidote, in doses sufficiently large, according to chemical laws, to neutralize its effects, or we fear that the most orthodox will not hold you *wholly* guiltless.

As to the example which your words and conduct may afford to others, and the influence which you may thereby exert for good or evil, it becomes you to listen attentively, and give serious heed to all which may fall from the lips of pious men, or may be suggested by the whispering of your own conscience.

We have said that the tendencies of the profession are neither to atheism or irreligion; but it must be admitted that, like all scientific studies, its tendencies are to interpretations of scripture by collating it with that other inspired volume, the book of nature, the age and authenticity of which cannot be questioned. It is not a matter of surprise, therefore, if the physician, studying the one more exclusively than the other, should sometimes fall into errors which a closer attention to the printed volume would correct; just as in the time of Galileo, the priests, by an exclusive respect for the printed word, made a serious mistake, which was only corrected by repeated observations of the written work whose leaves are ever being turned by the visible hand of the Almighty.

Whatever views you yourself adopt, be exceedingly careful how you give them expression, if they are contrary to the received doctrines of theology, lest, unwittingly, you influence the faith or affect the final destiny of some weak-minded listener.

"The life which is, and that which is to come,
Suspended, hung in such nice equipoise
A breath disturbs the balance; and that scale
In which we throw our hearts, preponderates;
And the other, like an empty one, flies up
And is accounted vanity and air!"

Exercising then, as you will, your own right to private judgment, you will shun the fearful responsibility of influencing the minds of others. Leave all such cares to the consciences of those who make the investigation of these questions the object of their lives; you will thus evince a becoming wisdom and will conform

to the requirements of that higher law which enjoins the duty of returning good for evil.

As a physician, your duties to those stricken with disease, will not cease with the conviction of its impending mortality; it will be your duty to alleviate suffering and make the act of dying as painless as possible; much may be done in this way to lessen the severity of the grievous blow to the hearts of surviving friends as well as to the departing patient.

You will rarely, perhaps never, witness those fearful mental tortures which are said by poets to often attend on the last moments of the dying; by a merciful arrangement the gradual rupture of the invisible bonds which connect the escaping spirit with the perishing body, most always destroys the earthly sympathies which before were manifest, and the tired sufferer generally longs to go and be at rest. Whatever questions of an anxious character may arise are usually submitted to the spiritual adviser. If ever the personal affection and trusting confidence, which it is the highest recompense of the physician to experience from his patients, should prompt an imploring appeal to you for guidance in this last extremity, you will, if a christian, have no delicacy as to your proper course; if not, you will still unhesitatingly advise a calm submission to the expressed will of the great Creator, with a humble reliance on his unfailing mercy.

“ Though temples crowd the crumbled brink,
O’erhanging truths eternal flow;
Their tablets bold with *what we think*,
Their echoes dumb to *what we know*.

“ That one unquestioned text we read,
All doubt beyond, all fear above,
Nor crackling pile nor cursing creed,
Can burn or blot it: God is Love.”

Whether christian or not, you will find a moral over which you will do well to ponder in the recorded life of one who, as a member of our profession, we assume was one of the wisest of the disciples. We read of no long prayers, or persistent questionings, or obtrusive services to his revered master; we only know that “he had perfect understanding of all things from the beginning,” and his life, and acts, and epitaph are all recorded in the simple phrase, “*the beloved physician.*”

May we not assume that *his altars* were erected by the cradle of infancy, the couch of prostrate manhood, of uncomplaining woman, and feeble old age, as, in his wanderings from Galilee to the Mount of Olives, he followed Christ.

When both Jew and Gentile go up together to the New Jerusalem, in that last great day, to celebrate the final passover, will not the young man, the old man, and the maiden, the lame, the halt, and the blind, who come from that hallowed land of Judea, bear in their grateful hearts an unquestioned testimony of his faithfulness?

There is another topic of some delicacy, but concerning which you should have clear ideas of duty. It is the *matter of remuneration for your professional services*. Understand, then, that you owe it not only to yourself and your fellow-practitioners, but to the true honor and dignity of the profession, to demand and exact a suitable acknowledgment; and while you "temper the wind to the shorn lamb," you will with equal judgment select the seasons when you can mercifully shear. There is neither wisdom or piety in the spirit which leads many of the profession to make martyrs of themselves and their fellow-sufferers, by a course which belittles the value of their services and the profession, in the eyes of the thankless recipients of its benefits. There is no dignity, though it is certainly an occasion for humility, in becoming a church pauper, that the muck-rakers of the world may increase their ill-gotten gains. That is a silly sheep, and its ears are too much occupied with its own bleatings to detect the true direction from which comes the voice of its shepherd, which gives its skin to the ravening wolves. You will never grow so rich by practice as to be troubled by "great possessions;" or if you should, "the poor are always with you," and the course I have recommended is consistent with the broadest charity and the most self-sacrificing benevolence. Never refuse your services to any because they cannot recompense you with money. The poor enlarge the bounds of your experience and afford you hundreds of opportunities for acquiring that accurate knowledge and discriminating skill, the engrossing desire for which characterises the true physician; and they give you freely that grateful homage, that warm affection, and that trusting confidence, without which, the life of a physician would be a desert

journey, and without which, the obligations of the most wealthy are uncanceled.

In your intercourse with the rich and those "in high places," respect yourself and the profession you represent, and you will always be respected and respectfully treated, by those whom refinement, or culture, or intellect renders fitted for the positions they occupy.

If you meet with those of a different character, and are *patronised*, be slow to anger, they will deserve rather your pity; but when forbearance ceases to be a virtue, commend them with proper emphasis to the — *doctor*.

There is one more topic to which I call your attention, and I have done: *Care not too much for the opinions of others*. It being the object of your life, as a physician, in contradistinction to that of the doctor, *to be* and not *to seem*; you cannot fail to acquire that knowledge, that skill, and those generous sentiments, which will welcome you, eventually, to the esteem of the judicious few whose regard is alone worth having. You will be admitted to the cordial friendship of the scholar-class, which is acquired only by those who have the pass-words acquired by diligent application, patient labor and elevated aims. Your professional reputation will be secured by the same steps which enable you to deserve it. A popular reputation may, or may not, be secured by the same means; if it is not, it will be simply a matter of regret, as far as it affects that pecuniary success which even honorable minds may aspire to. If it is not, you will adapt yourself to your straightened circumstances, proud of your honorable poverty, and envying not the wealth which is the "gilded badge of servitude and shame." As long as you are satisfied with the rectitude of your intentions, and the wisdom of your course, care nothing for the good opinion of the vulgar crowd, which sees, in every thing above its level and comprehension, an erratic movement. To the eye of the ordinary observer, all heavenly bodies pursue an apparent course, very different from their actual one. The planets seem to retrace their inconstant steps, and the mysterious comet seems now to meet the sun in his coming, and now to follow him in his evening course; yet, they conform to the appointed law of their being, and, however erratic their apparent movements, the enlightened

observation of the astronomer is able to determine the relation of their unseen orbit to the great center, about which they keep their appointed way. The more distant the controlling center, and the more magnificent the resulting circle, the less the apparent progress, and the more exalted the mind which comprehends the resulting movement.

To the eye of the most profound philosophy, enlightened by faith, is alone visible that stupendous circle, around which the whole material universe revolves, gravitating towards a center "hard by the throne of God."

"As I look from the isle, o'er is billows of green,
 To the billows of foam-crested blue,
 Yon bark, that afar in the distance is seen,
 Half-dreaming, my eyes will pursue;
 Now dark in the shadow she scatters the spray
 As the chaff in the stroke of the flail;
 Now white as the sea-gull, she flies on her way,
 The sun gleaming bright on her sail.

Yet her pilot is thinking of dangers to shun,—
 Of breakers that whiten and roar;
 How little he cares, if in shadow or sun
 They see him that gaze from the shore!
 He looks to the beacon that looms from the reef,
 To the rock that is under his lee,
 As he drifts on the blast, like a wind-wafted leaf,
 O'er the gulfs of the desolate sea.

Thus drifting afar to the dim-vaulted eaves
 Where life and its ventures are laid,
 The dreamers, who gaze while we battle the waves,
 May see us in sunshine or shade;
 Yet true to our course, though our shadow grow dark,
 We'll trim our broad sail as before,
 And stand by the rudder that governs the bark,
 Nor ask how we look from the shore!"

